

VISION

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From Depression to Divine Destiny

Early Years.

I was born in Hamilton in 1957. All our family were traditional Anglicans, and we went along to the Cathedral every Sunday. I would go through the motions because I wanted to be doing the things that pleased my Dad. I would say the prayers, but struggled to see any relevance with this Christian experience, because I never saw prayer answered or people walking in a relationship with God. Religion just looked to me like it was designed to stop you having fun. I began to harden my heart more and more to the message of Jesus.

As I got older I started rebelling and, in the holidays, got hooked up in some unfortunate relationships with a contracting gang picking up hay bales. What it turned out to be was more like a school of debauchery and immorality which introduced me to a lifestyle of self-indulgence and lust.

In my sixth form year I was told that one of the things we do as Anglicans, as we come of age, is to go through a confirmation service to align ourselves with the faith of the Church. I went along to church for a week of studying what Christians believe. At the end of the week my Dad was hoping I would join the family faith and be confirmed as an

Anglican. Unfortunately, all the week did was convince me that I wasn't going to be a Christian. When Dad challenged me about what I was going to do about confirmation, I responded with a challenge back to God. I said, "unless God is real enough to make himself real to me, I can never serve an imaginary God, and anyway whose religion is right?" I knew I was becoming more rebellious by the day. It was time for me to leave home, but God had heard my challenge.

Determined to Get Money and Success.

I moved out of home and determined I was going to have money. I had seen my parents struggle with very little money throughout most of their lives. I didn't believe in God, I chose to serve money and go after the things that made me happy. I decided to work hard and to do whatever it took to get the things I believed made a successful life in New

Zealand. I learned how to shear sheep and made great money at that. When I was 21 I was offered a job as a share milker at Tokoroa, on a farm with 80 cows. I had a big ego, so I took the opportunity. A guy gave me 20 cows and within 3 years I had taken the farm up to 200 cows. I worked my butt off, from 4am until 9.30 at night. I worked and worked and worked. I wanted to be successful and I found my value in what I did.



At the end of 3 years I was pushing too hard. I was drinking too much coffee and living a life of total stress as the jobs I were doing were incredibly hard farming jobs. I was still a single guy because I was a bit scared of girls and relationships. In all honesty, I was hiding away on the farm because of personal issues of insecurity and inferiority. My material success and accomplishments were a smokescreen to cover deep-seated issues of rejection and self-hatred. On the outside all appeared well; I was a good shearer, I could build, I could weld, I had broken in this farm, I had done well.

The farmer where I was share milking came one day and said, "Geoff, there's a farm down the road for sale, 900 acres of rough scrub. There are 100 cows and 700 sheep on it. I reckon you could make a go of it". I couldn't afford it, but my uncle came in as a silent partner and so I moved from share milking to my own farm. I continued working long hours, breaking the farm in. I put power and water in and after 4 years I had 400 cows, 1800 ewes and beef cattle. I was working all day and into the night for the NZ dream. Along with my uncle, I built a cow shed, increasing its capacity from 8 a side to 20 a side, then to 40 a side and finally 56 a side herringbone shed.

Marriage and Heartbreak.

During this time my "wife to be" came to milk the cows. She loved the farming and decided she wanted to be married to me as she liked what she saw in my work habits. Alison had an alcoholic father who had no work ethic. She decided I was the answer to her problem. I thought also she would be the answer to my problem. We got married and began married life, but it wasn't long before my inferiorities and insecurities came to the surface. So now not only did I have an enormous farm to break in and manage, but I had issues in my marriage.

My wife, wanting to make this marriage work, decided that maybe if she could give me a son it would fix our relationship problems, but God had a bit of a sense of humour. I was loving having children, but Alison had an idea that I needed a little boy. Our first baby was a little girl. Then we had a second little girl 18 months later. Alison was upset at this, thinking that a boy would help fix the marriage. We tried a third time for a boy but had another girl. Alison gave up after three children as there were now three under five and that was more than enough.

At the same time the farm next door came up for sale and I bought another 450 acres. So now I had an enormous place, 400 cows on the original farm as well as the next farm and we've just had a third little girl. Talk about the straw that broke the camel's back. My poor wife had had enough. She went to the South Island to visit her brother and to get away from her problems with me at home. Little did I know she had serious postnatal depression that she was hiding from me. She began telling her family in Christchurch about how terrible our marriage circumstances were. They advised her to leave the marriage.

I was oblivious to the depth of the problem and her despair. I was working away waiting for my wife to come home with our new little baby. I got a phone call from her saying, "Our marriage is over. I can't do it any more, I don't love you anymore, I don't want to be back with you, it's finished." I was devastated beyond belief and I fell into a deep hole of depression and was overtaken with grief. The farm that used to make me feel excited now just looked like hard work. I came to the end of myself, I got depressed. I went for counselling. The counsellor told me to get another wife. I didn't want another wife, I wanted family, I wanted my girls back, I wanted wholeness, a future with my family.

I travelled to Christchurch to visit Alison. She agreed to come back home, but only to carry on her work at the hospital and to allow the kids to continue schooling, until the farm was sold. Then we were to go our separate ways. Even though we were living together, our lives were hell. I became very sick and unable to function properly. I still had a partner working with me on the farm. He stopped me from walking off the property and encouraged me to put a share milker on the farm. By all accounts I was retired at 30 with everything I wanted. However, I was completely dead inside and contemplating suicide because I saw no hope in the things of life or any hope for my relationship for the future. I would look out at the farm I used to love and now saw it as just dirt.

I started visiting the doctor. Over the next months, every 2 weeks I would go and see him. The doctor prescribed me uppers and downers, and any drugs or medication they could possibly find to try and help me, but nothing worked. My doctor studied our family history and found that there was a history of depression and mood swings. The doctor basically said, "Sorry son, you are going to be on these drugs for the rest of your life".

In the middle of this my dad developed a brain tumour. So I visited him. When I saw him, I was taken aback. He had a glow all over his face. I thought he looked remarkably happy for someone on death's door. He said, "Son, I'm not worried about dying. Everyone is going to die at some stage, but I know the Lord Jesus and He has filled me with His love in my heart. I know heaven is real and now heaven is my home, the difference is I know where I am going. I'm worried about you?"

I Was Down and Out but Still Resisting God.

As I stayed with them for a few days, my mother had a go at me too. She said, "Geoff you need Jesus, you've got issues." I resisted her. The next day was a Sunday, and she again challenged me to come along to church as they were going to take my daughter Sarah along with them. That one challenge to move me to attend church again was positioning me for a radical life change. I thought it couldn't hurt for a couple of hours to go to church again. My only church experience was the Anglican church and I'd never seen anything Pentecostal in my life. I had no idea who the Holy Spirit was? This "Pentecostal church," was a totally different culture to what I had ever seen before. I saw mates from school, real troublemakers, but they looked quite different up the front of the church now. They were playing drums, they were beaming and worshipping God. I thought this was radical.

The Pastor started calling people out to get prayer for healing. It was interesting but didn't move me much. The pastor then said, "There's someone here who is really stressed out and needs to give his life to Christ". My mother challenged me to go forward and challenge God to make Himself real. I didn't need anybody to tell me I had major problems in my life and that I was a sinner. I had problems with pornography, lust. I had stolen. I had an anger problem and violent mood swings with rage at times. I prayed, "God, I know I'm a sinner, so please forgive me. If You are real, I acknowledge my sins.



If You are real, make Yourself real to me and I will serve You the rest of my life".

I believe God meets us when we get real. That prayer was really from my heart. For the next 10 days I took down every guard. I let those Christians share with me and invite me to church. I kept my mouth shut and didn't argue. I felt something start to happen. It felt like light rain washing over me. I was now 32 years old. After 10 days, when I woke up in the morning, I opened my eyes and somehow my whole bedroom was filled with power. Jesus was in the room. Waves of power seemed to fill me and the room. The first wave was love, then a wave of peace, then a wave of joy. I was experiencing a sense of the presence of the living God going through my body and filling the room. I didn't want to move. I said to myself, "if this is what heaven is like, I want this?" I had this weird feeling that I

know, that I know, that I know that there is a God and I knew that God had given me faith to believe and trust Him. I had never experienced anything like this before in my whole life. This was real. This was Jesus healing me and setting me free. I knew I was forgiven, and I felt clean. Now that I knew God was real, I knew I had a purpose and a destiny. I felt loved.

Longing for Marriage Reconciliation.

I thought I needed to share my experience with my wife Alison, so I rang her up even though we weren't on talking terms. I said, "Alison I need to tell you that something has happened in my life. I've just become a Christian". Well the world went cold at the other end of the phone, she just shut down. She told me afterwards, that it was bad enough that I was a workaholic, but the last thing she wanted was a religious nut.

I went home a couple of days later and started to try and tell her what had happened, but she didn't want to hear. I would go to every meeting at church as I wanted more of this sense of God's power and love. I wanted to know this God that could love someone like me. I didn't understand much, I didn't know what the Bible said, but I knew there was life here, love here, healing here, hope here. I

was hanging onto this awareness. I knew, that I knew, that I knew heaven is real. I knew God had forgiven me and that I didn't need to fear whatever happened. My wife got smarter now. As she would hear me coming up the drive at night, she would turn the TV volume up, so there was no way she would have to listen to me talk about Jesus.

Delivered from Medical Drugs.

About 3 weeks later the church started teaching me about the power in the name of Jesus. I was still on the drugs the doctors had told me I would be on for the rest of my life. They were heavy drugs and I couldn't just come off them. I determined that if what the church was teaching me was real, then I could get delivered from these drugs. So, I began to cry out in the name of Jesus. At first it was a little cry because I didn't have much faith. I tried to reduce the amount of the drugs and failed. I went back on them again, but a few days later I said: "I'm going to do it". I then flushed them all down the toilet. That night I stood up and said, "In the name of Jesus I receive my healing". I felt electricity flowing down my arms. The next morning I woke up delivered from the drugs. I have never been back to a doctor for any of the conditions for which I was prescribed the drugs.

The depression came back a few times but the people from church explained it was a spiritual condition. As I learnt to resist it in the name of Jesus, that stopped. I had my health back. My share milker was going well, the farm was doing well, but I knew this encounter with a living God was the most significant thing that had ever happened to me in my life. All my perspectives had changed. How could I live a selfish life of self-indulgence when people were going to hell. I knew I had to learn how to communicate my faith and tell others about Jesus. For the next 9 months I spent my time going to church and listening to stories of hundreds of lives being changed by Jesus.

During this time my wife was watching my life and she saw me happy, continually being filled with joy. The mood swings had disappeared. I was distinctly different and trying to love her but she was hard towards me and God. She decided she was going to get more resolute. She told me to take my loser friends and keep them outside the gate. Then she got angry. I didn't know why until she told me later, she said, "You ruined my life. Then this God came into your life and now you are full of joy". So, she attacked me and told me to shut up and never talk about God and never invite her to church. I still felt the joy of God, but thought my marriage was over.

A few months later a healing evangelist came to town. His story was like mine, a successful dairy farmer who came to Jesus. Alison was intrigued and wanted to find out what had happened to this man and tricked me into taking her along to a dinner meeting. In the middle of the meeting the man challenged her that there is a God and that she needed to get right with him. He asked all those who didn't know Jesus to lift their hand. She put her hand up. At the end of the meeting he invited all those who lifted their hand and wanted to give their lives to Jesus to come to the front.

Conversion of My Wife Alison.

All she heard was the bit about those that had lifted their hand, to come to the front, so she went forward. The Pastor started leading her in the sinners' prayer, but she thought, "This is dumb, what is going on here, I don't believe in God and I don't want to play this silly game!" I thought she was giving her life to Christ and was bawling my eyes out to think that she would know the love of Jesus and be changed as I was. I had no hope for our marriage and had completely put that on the altar, but I wanted to see my wife saved.

She came back and said, "I'm not playing this game, I don't want to do this," but we challenged her to take the next 10 days and cry out to God to make Himself real. "If nothing happens then you can take the kids and leave but I know that God is real, and He will touch your life." For the next ten days she cried out to God. "God if You're there, this is your chance". At the end of ten days we went to church in the morning, but nothing happened. We went home but there was still an evening service to attend and see what would happen. During the afternoon one of our girls became sick and Alison said, "Geoff, I've done that thing". I said, "There's a service tonight, you go to church on your own and I will stay home with Nicky". She said she was just going to finish the challenge, so she could put it behind her and get back on with her life.

She said she felt like she was going into the lion's den that night and had absolutely no faith, but praise God, His love was greater than her unbelief. She walked into the lion's den and in the middle of the service, while singing and worship were going on, suddenly, the same thing that happened in my bedroom, happened to her. God's love poured into her. She was set free of every bitterness, every anger, every unbelief and I got a brand-new wife. Hallelujah! She said it was like she was experiencing the very essence of love being poured all over her and washing through her. When she

came home, this lady who had gone out hard, bitter and unbelieving, came back with a glow on her face and so soft. As she looked at me she realised that with the bitterness gone, she could love me and believe for our marriage. Our marriage was healed, and we began a honeymoon journey. Jesus gave me my wife back and a brand-new life!

The First Soul Saved.

The cry of my heart from the moment I was saved was, "Why didn't somebody tell me that Jesus is real?" The Pastor told me I needed to find out how God was going to use me. I came home from a church service. I got on my knees and said, "God show me how you are going to use me if you want me to stay on this farm?"

Immediately there was someone banging on the back door. I laughed and said to Alison, "This must be God going to show me how he is going to use me?" There was a man at the back door. He said his car had broken down. He asked if I could help him. I said sure, just leave your family here and I'll take you down to my cowshed workshop to work on your car. We went down to the workshop and I managed to fix it. He said he wanted to pay me, but I said I didn't want his money. I told him I had become a Christian and that God had healed me and miraculously restored my marriage. I now had my health back and I knew that I knew that there was a living God and a real heaven and a hell. "Oh", he said, "that's interesting, my wife is one of those "born again" Christians. I've been mocking her for the past couple of years." I didn't even know any

scriptures at that stage, but I just said, "Mate, it's real! God is real, He is realer than all that farm you can see out there. I can feel His love and power with me even now" and then I let him go.

To cut a long story short, five weeks later his wife drove all the way up from Feilding to say that during that week her husband and son gave their lives to Jesus and their marriage had been transformed. God had heard my prayer and had immediately sent an answer to my prayer. I had a choice, I could have just fixed his car and sent him on his way and said nothing, but I shared the testimony of Jesus. God used it to begin to win souls. That was the beginning of my journey as a disciple of Christ.

The Bible says if you seek God you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart. I have now moved out into the world as a healing evangelist and church planter. I'm still happily married to Alison and my oldest daughter, along with her husband, are pastoring a church in Hamilton City as well. God takes the little seeds of faith and took my challenge to show me what he can do with a man who would say yes.

Maybe you need to say yes to Jesus today and you too can find your destiny which has been predestined for you to walk in as a child of God. All the glory of the story belongs to God but if he can do it for me, he can do it for you!

Geoff Winter, Hamilton Chapter

Pacific Outreach

One project the board are considering, is sending an outreach team up into the Pacific in 2019. In the 1980's many teams from New Zealand travelled to Tonga, Fiji, Samoa and New Caledonia, sharing with government and business leaders. Several chapters were formed but none lasted long because of a lack of local leadership and the moving of expatriates. There may be a possibility we could arrange something in cooperation with FGBMFI Australia.

We are still at the initial planning stage, but if this is something you would be interested in participating in, or interested in supporting financially, please express your interest by contacting the National Office.



From The National President's Desk

Life is sometimes Like a box of Chocolates.

(You get some you don't like)

Sometimes, you just don't know what you are going to get until you dip your hand in Life's box of chocolates.

There are times when the future can look very uncertain, maybe its health, family, business, as a number of our people are going through at this time.

Think of and pray for Erick and Amy Saunders of Te Awamutu chapter, who are still going through it right now. They had a herd of 200 Dairy cows stolen a few months ago, trucked away without trace. The man leasing the herd was tracked down to Bali, but he was killed in the earthquakes there before the police could talk to him, so there are no firm leads for the police to follow.

Now that is a real life test of faith! Now that's enough to put you off your cornflakes. (My ride on mower breakdown, pales in significance.)

When the "fog" of life comes down around you, and you can't see your way clearly ahead, its best to just sit still until the fog clears. (as I was told some years ago, while tramping high up on Mt Earnslaw in the South Island).

"Perhaps" God will do something.

I love *1 Samuel chapter 13:22; "On the day of the battle, only two men in the army had weapons." And 1 Samuel 14 :6 to 15; " Perhaps the Lord will act on our behalf."*

In this story, Israel did not stand a chance, an army with no weapons, but at the end of the day, the enemy is beaten and in full retreat, just because two men had enough faith to say, "perhaps".

I have been watching Aljazeera TV channel lately, they have been running a series of documentaries on Israel's wars.

In 1967, Israel had the "6-Day war" and then in 1973, the Yom Kippur war. In both cases, a number of Arab countries attacked Israel.

In 1967, Israel had 250,000 troops, 800 tanks and 300 planes.

The enemy had 547,000 troops, 2504 tanks and 957 planes.

However, on the first day, Israel destroyed 500 enemy planes on the ground and in six days had won the war and gained territory.

Again, in 1973, out-numbered 5 to 1, a surprise attack by the Arabs on the holiest day of Yom Kippur, Israel again won and gained more territory than they had before the war (but suffered significant casualties).



God is in the business of "perhaps". He comes in when we run out of ideas.

No, the maths may not work out, but when God says he is for us, who can stand against us.

Hebrews 10:35; Don't throw away your confidence, it will be richly rewarded.

2 Corinthians 4:8 to 10. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not abandoned, struck down, but not destroyed, because we carry in us the Lord Jesus.

"Perhaps" you are at your wit's end. Someone once said, when you are in a deep hole, try looking up.

We don't have all the answers, but we know someone who has.

Blessing and Peace in the Battle.

Graham Eagle

National President.

South Island Regional Camp



The En Hakkore camp in July was yet another awesome time, praise the Lord! The food and the fellowship were fantastic. The worship was outstanding - a break from tradition, but fresh and intimate and you could really sense the presence of God. Our speaker, Len Donaldson (National President FGBMFI Australia), was excellent.

I believe this paved the way for the powerful ministry that followed. There was more

deliverance than I've ever seen at a camp before. I had the pleasure of being Len's main catcher, and so I witnessed lots of guys being set free as demons were cast out of them.

Thanks to all the hard workers for making this a special camp. I'll be back!

Mark Nimmo, Dunedin Chapter

Len Donaldson Tour

Following the regional camp, our camp speaker, Len Donaldson, spent a week on the road sharing his testimony at chapter outreach meetings from Invercargill to Christchurch, with meetings on six consecutive nights.

The Dunedin and Taieri chapters held a combined meeting with 60-70 people present, with Len sharing his story. As a young man he headed off to Australia to make his way in the world. There he met Carolyn, who became his wife and the mother of their five children. The problem was Len was an alcoholic and like many addicts he was only living for himself. After 10 years of marriage, Len had an

encounter with Jesus Christ one Friday night and radically changed his life.

Life has not always been easy, including the tragic loss of a 16-year-old son and being involved in a serious aeroplane crash that could have easily taken his life. Len works in the construction industry in Queensland, is often asked to speak at industry meetings and shares Jesus with many men.

It was Len's background that prompted me to invite a workmate, who also works as a full time builder. My friend was keen to come, so I briefly outlined Len's story and also invited him for a meal

at a local café with my family (the meeting was not a dinner meeting). The traditional model of fellowship over a meal is a natural icebreaker before an outreach meeting.

The outreach meeting was a great success with five people praying the sinner's prayer with Len. Sadly, my friend was not one of them. However, he did say he enjoyed the meeting and we



remain firm friends. There was a relaxed atmosphere and many people stayed and chatted over a coffee afterwards.

Len has a clear strong testimony and I would recommend him as a guest speaker.

Alastair Mutch, Dunedin Chapter

FGBMFI International

In the early 1990's FGBMFI fragmented internationally following changes made to the by-laws of the organisation. New Zealand along with many other countries removed themselves from being affiliated with the International organisation at that time.

With recent changes to the leadership of the International organisation there has been a desire to heal rifts from the past.

Len Donaldson, National President of FGBMFI Australia, in July attended the World Convention in Las Vegas and attended the International Board meeting as an observer. Len was very impressed with the transparent way in which issues were dealt with, the calibre of the International leadership team and the desire to bring restoration of relationships internationally.

Len attended our NZ July board meeting and reported on his experience at those meetings. FGBMFI Australia have since agreed at their August AGM to re-affiliate with the International organisation.

We understand that at the next International Board meeting, in France in October, a new set of by-laws will be presented for consideration. Len plans to attend this meeting and will report to us on the outcomes.

Our NZ board is watching all this with interest and are encouraged by what seems to be happening. We have made no contact with the International Board at this stage, but will consider our next move after we receive Len's report on the October meeting in France.

Please be praying into what is happening.

A decorative banner with a gold background and a red border, featuring the quote "His Banner Over Us Is Love" in blue serif font.

"His Banner Over Us Is Love"

Gone to Glory

Ron Clouston (Timaru)

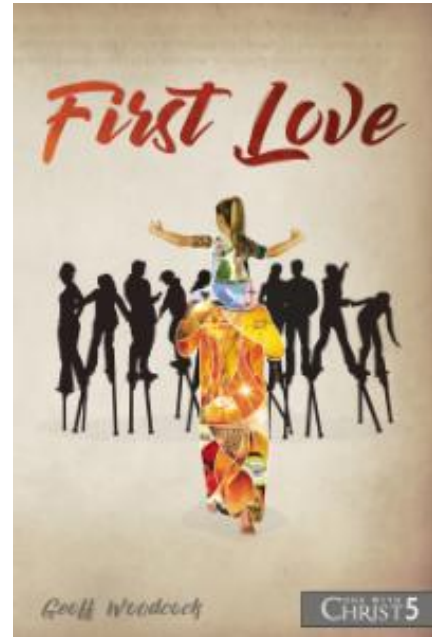
As a farmer in Albury, Ron was a founding member of the Mackenzie Chapter of FGBMFI. He was involved for twenty years and served as chapter president from 1985 to 1986. After retiring from farming, he moved to Timaru in 2003, where he became a member of the Timaru chapter. He remained a member up until his death on the 28th June this year. He was a very good man who will be greatly missed.

First Love

Many of you will remember Geoff Woodcock, a member of the Taieri Chapter. He was a speaker at the Queenstown convention and shared some of his testimony at this year's convention. Geoff has just published another book, 'First Love.'

Mike Bunt has commented to me that a number of men in the chapter are being blown away by its content. It is available on line at www.onewithchrist.org for purchase or can be downloaded for free as a PDF.

In 'First Love', the focus is on how to encounter God. With this aim, each chapter is followed by some prompts and reflections, designed to inspire you to engage with God. Rather than a book that you can read in a day, 'First Love' is designed as more of a daily devotional.



New National Board Member - Hugh August

Hugh was raised in Christchurch and attended a private Presbyterian school. After initially studying and working as a cost and management accountant, he decided to pursue a career as a business training consultant which he did for many years. He won a worldwide award for corporate selling and gained valuable experience and mentoring in the USA. He has written over fifty training sessions and his programmes have been used by many of NZ's top companies.

He was born again in his thirty's and shortly thereafter received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Later, he was ordained as an elder in the



Presbyterian Church and served on the Christchurch Presbytery.

Hugh joined FGBMFI in the 1980's and was a chapter president in Christchurch for over a decade. These were exciting days and Hugh saw many salvations as a result of the ministry of FGBMFI. Through his experiences Hugh learned to minister powerfully in deliverance and healing.

Hugh has re-joined FGBMFI in recent years and is President of the Timaru Chapter. The National Board unanimously asked him to become a National Director, which was ratified at the AGM.